

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराजिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I, iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

XIX.

[Place—Belur, monastery in a rented house. Year—1898.

Subjects—Swamiji encourages the disciple to take to trade.—The middle classes of this country have been reduced to misery for want of Shraddha—faith in oneself.—In England, people who are in the service or employment of others are looked down upon.—The unpracticality of the so-called educated people in India.—What is education?—The practicality and self-reliance of the masses in India are greater than those of the gentry.]

The disciple has come to the Math this morning. As soon as he stood up after touching the feet of Swamiji, Swamiji said, "What's the use of your continuing in service any more? Why not go in for some business?" The disciple was then employed as a private tutor in some family. The burden of family-life has not yet come upon him. He spends his days joyfully. Asked about the profession of teaching, Swamiji said, "If one does the work of teaching boys for a long time, he gets blunt in intellect; his intelligence is not manifested. If one stays among a crowd of boys day and night, gradually he gets obtuse. So don't do the work of teaching boys any more."

Disciple.— What shall I do then?

Swamiji.— Why? If you want to live the life of a worldly man and have a desire for earning money, then go over to America. I shall give you directions for business. You will find that in five years you get together so much money.

Disciple.— What business shall I go in for? And where am I to get the money?

Swamiji.— What nonsense are you talking? Within you lies indomitable power. Only thinking, "I am nothing, I am nothing," you have become powerless. Why you alone! The whole race has become so. Go round the world once and

you will find how the life-current of other nations is flowing vigorously. And what are you doing! Even after learning so much, you go about the doors of others, crying, "Give me employment." Trampled under others' feet, doing slavery for others, are you men any more? You are not worth a pin's head! In this fertile country of abundant water-supply, where Nature produces wealth and harvest a thousand times more than in others, you have no food for your stomachs, no clothes to cover your bodies! In this country of abundance, the produce of which has been the cause of the spread of civilisation in other countries, you are reduced to such straits! Your condition is even worse than that of a dog! And you glory in your Vedas and Vedanta! A nation that cannot provide for its simple food and clothing, which always depends on others for its subsistence—what is there for it to vaunt about? Let your religious observances now flow away with the current of the Ganges, and be first prepared for the struggle for existence. People of foreign countries are turning out such golden results from the raw materials produced in your country, and you, like asses of burden, are only carrying their load. The people of foreign countries import Indian raw goods, manufacture various commodities by bringing their intelligence to bear upon them and become great; whereas you have locked up your intelligence, thrown away your inherited wealth to others, and roam about crying piteously for food!

Disciple.— By what means, Sir, can the means of subsistence be procured?

Swamiji.— Why, the means are in your hands. You blindfold your eyes and say, "I am blind and can see nothing." Tear off the folds from your eyes and you

will see the whole world is lighted by the rays of the midday sun. If you cannot procure money, go to foreign countries, working your passage as a *lascar*. Take Indian cloth, towel, bamboo-work and other indigenous products and peddle in the streets of Europe and America; you will find how greatly Indian products are appreciated in foreign markets even now. In America I found some Mahomedans of the Hugly district had grown rich by peddling Indian commodities in this way. Have you even less intelligence than they? Take, for example, such excellent fabric as the Benares-made *saris* of India, the like of which are not produced anywhere else in the world. Go to America with this cloth. Have gowns made out of this fabric and sell them, and you will see how much you earn.

Disciple.— Sir, why will they wear gowns made of the *saris* of Benares? I have heard that clothes painted diversely are not to the taste of the ladies in those countries.

Swamiji.— Whether they will receive them or not, I shall look to that. It is for you to exert yourself and go over there. I have many friends in that country, to whom I shall introduce you. At first I shall request them to take this cloth up among themselves. Then you will find many will follow suit and at last you won't be able to keep the supply up to the enormous demand.

Disciple.— Where shall I get the capital for the business?

Swamiji.— I shall anyhow give you a start; for the rest you must depend on your own exertions. "If you fail, you get to heaven, if you win, you enjoy the earth." (Gita). Even if you die in this attempt, well and good, many will take up the work,

following your example. And if you succeed, you will live a life of great opulence.

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, so it is. But I cannot muster sufficient courage.

Swamiji.— That is what I say, my son, you have no *Shraddha*—no faith in yourself. What will you achieve? You will have neither material nor spiritual success. Either put forth your energy in the way I have suggested and be successful in life, or throw aside everything and take to the path we have chosen. Serve the people of all countries through spiritual instructions,—then only will you get your dōle of food like us. If there is no mutual exchange, do you think anybody cares for any other? You observe in our case that because we give the householders some spiritual instructions they in return give us some morsels of food. If you do nothing why will they give you food? You observe so much misery in mere service and slavery of others, still you are not waking up; and so your misery also is never at an end.—This is certainly the delusive power of Maya! In the West I found that those who are in the employment of others have their seats fixed in the back rows in the Parliament; while the front seats are reserved for those who have made themselves famous by self-exertion, or education, or intelligence. In Western countries there are no botherations of caste. Those on whom Fortune smiles for their industry and exertion, are alone regarded as leaders of the country and the controllers of its destiny. Whereas in your country, you are simply vaunting of your superiority in caste. So much so that you cannot even get a morsel of food! You have not the capacity to manufacture a needle and you dare to criticise the English,—fools! Sit at their feet and learn of them the arts,

the industries and the practicality necessary for the struggle for existence. You will be esteemed once more when you will be fit. Then they too will pay heed to your words. Without the necessary preparation, what will mere shouting in the Congress avail?

Disciple.— Sir, all the educated men of the country have joined it.

Swamiji.— Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and give good lectures. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring on strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on his own legs. The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence.

The peasant, the shoemaker, the sweeper, and such other lower classes of India have much greater capacity for work and self-reliance than you. They have been silently working through long ages, and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of complaint. Very soon they will get above you. Gradually capital is drifting into their hands and they are not so much oppressed with wants as you are. Modern education has changed your fashion but new avenues of wealth lie undiscovered for want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these forbearing masses, now is the time for their retribution. And you shall become extinct in your vain search for employment, making it the be-all and end-all of your life.

(To be continued).

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE question whether the Upanishads teach only Jnana (Knowledge), or Jnana and Bhakti (Knowledge and Love), was the subject of a discourse on "the Upanishadic doctrine of Love" by Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan in the Sadharan Brahma Samaj Mandir. The learned lecturer opines that the Upanishads teach a unity-in-difference of Brahman and individual souls and are opposed to the teaching of Absolute Monism or absolute identity of individual soul and Brahman. Indeed the view of unity-in-difference, which implies man's consciousness of God as a distinct Reality, though he is essentially related to Him, represents the standpoint of the Qualified Monism of Vedantic thought as expounded by Sri Ramanuja; whereas the view of the absolute identity of Jiva and Brahman as an Abstract Universal, excluding the differences of the universe, is the standpoint of Monism as represented by Sankara and his school.

It is easy to pick out sentences from the Upanishadic texts in support of either of these positions and to contend, as has been done by writers of sectarian schools, that one and one only is the postulate of the Upanishads, to the exclusion of others. But we should, in justice to the very Upanishads we revere, seek out a better explanation, which will interpret them not in the spirit of militancy or secession of one portion from another, but seek to include them all in a harmonious vision, showing the place of each in the general march of Vedantic thought. This eclectic spirit of interpretation is the very soul of our indigenous system of criticism, as

against the spirit of secession and militancy which marks the whole history of theological discussion in the West. That one view of God may be apparently contradictory to another and yet may not be inconsistent with it, but rather a development of the other, which may also exist and have a place side by side with it, is native to the soul of Indian spiritual consciousness.

It is idle to contend that the Upanishads teach only the Qualified Monism of unity-in-difference to the exclusion of Unqualified Monism, or absolute unity excluding all differences, or *vice versa*. They teach both, and as the Swami Vivekananda says, "They are but different conceptions leading to the final conclusion that both Dualistic and Monistic conceptions are necessary for the evolution of the mind, therefore the Vedas preach them." "It is my attempt to show that the Vedantic schools are not contradictory, that they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other and one is, as it were, the stepping stone to the other, until the goal, the Advaita, the Tattvamasi, is reached." Indeed, in many chapters of the Upanishads it can be shown that the progress of thought is from the dualistic or quasi-monistic to the monistic phase; they begin with dualistic ideas of worship, but round off with Absolute Monism in which all difference is merged in unity-without-difference. In the very chapter of *Brihadaranyaka* Upanishad (Second Chapter, Fourth Brahmana) from which the learned lecturer quotes, "Navá are patyuh kámayá patih prio bhavati", etc.

(Behold, it is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear, but for the sake of the Self the husband is dear), as implying man's love of God as a Reality distinct from, though essentially related to him,—ends off with the idea of Brahman as an absolute reality excluding all the differences of the universe, in the words—यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं पश्यति, इतर इतरं शृणोति...यत्र वा अस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत्तत्केन कं पश्येत्तत्केन कं शृणुयात् etc. "For when there is, as it were, duality, then one sees the other, one hears the other, but when the Self only is all this, how should one see another, how should one hear another?" In the face of such explicit statement it is but temerity to assert that the Upanishads speak only of difference-in-unity of Jiva and Brahman and not absolute unity without difference. The true position of the Upanishads is that they teach the quasi-monistic and monistic phases of thought, as necessary for the evolution of the mind, and as one developing into the other.

The fear that assails our present individualised consciousness is that if the Absolute Monism is reached—when all duality will be merged in a Unity excluding all differences, it will mean the loss of all sweetness of the diversity of relations in love, knowledge, and action based on duality, which constitutes the nexus of our worldly and social life. When confronted with Absolute Monism, the first thought and words that occur to one unaccustomed to it are, "we shall lose our individuality." But few stop to understand that Absolute Monism implies no loss of our being, either qualitatively or quantitatively. The Impersonal is not the negation of personality, but the perfection and culmination of it. It indeed carries the personality to the highest synthesis of

love and knowledge, from which source all the sweetness of our personal love and the diversity of knowledge flow. We may, in the highest unity of Brahman, miss our personal objects of love and the diverse objects of knowledge and interests as personality or diversity, which have such a fascination for us in this world of relativity to which we desire to cling; but we will enjoy them and receive them in a more intense way, as being absolutely one and identified with us in the soul and hence nearest to us. The philosopher undaunted by the superstition of personality and diversity on his own part and on that of others must assert that absolute identity, excluding all differences, is the highest synthesis of thought and the high water-mark of religious realisation, that principle is superior to personality, that all things that have name and form are subject to the All that has none.

The highest Monism cannot be stated in terms of relative consciousness; it is not an object of speech or thought, but a fact of "transcendent perception" (*aparokshānubhūti*), where words and thought fail. For the attempt to indicate, state or relate it, will break the Absolute Monism and introduce one element of diversity. Advaitism made practical, that is, brought down within the domain of speech and thought, becomes *Viśiṣṭādvaitism*,—the absolute, undifferentiated Unity becomes a unity-in-difference. The lecturer points out, "There is no basis for *Sādhana*, even the culture of Jnana (Knowledge), in Absolute Monism, and if the Upanishads are interpreted as teaching a doctrine of unity-in-difference, they are not mere Jnana-shastras but Bhakti-shastras." But so long as one says, "I am the Brahman," he is an *upāsaka* who seeks to attain

unity, and not a *Jnani* who has attained unity, for there is the semblance of duality involved in it. But the *Sadhaka* of the *Jnana-marga* (Path of Knowledge) knows that ultimately he is one with the Brahman, that seen through the forms of the mind, the one unit existence has split itself into duality; and by the help of this duality necessitated by the limitations of his mind, he wants to work up to the Absolute Unity of the Brahman, when the mind will be transcended and its limitations cast away. In Sankara's commentary on the Vedanta Sūtras, in answer to the *purvapaksha* (*prima facie* view), how the unit Brahman, excluding all differences, can be attained by the *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana* (hearing, thinking and meditating) of scriptural statements about Its existence, which involve diversity of words and thoughts, the reply is put forward that hearing, meditating etc. will not directly bring about the attainment of Unity, but only serve to destroy the diversity caused by ignorance. The *sadhaka* works on the basis of duality, which is a datum of ignorance necessitated by his present position, in order to inhibit this duality, and reach the unity of Brahman, which is already self-attained and self-established and not to be attained *de novo*. There is thus ample scope for *Sadhana* or practice in Absolute Monism.

The lecturer says: "According to the advocates of Unqualified Monism, the Upanishads are only *Jnana-shastras*, not *Bhakti-shastras*—scriptures treating only of knowledge, and not of love. *Jnana* (knowledge), they say, only implies unity, whereas *bhakti* is founded on the idea of duality, which is ultimately a datum of ignorance." It is true that according to Unqualified Monism all duality is a datum

of ignorance; but there is all the difference of the poles between the duality of man's love for God and God's love for man—the duality which is involved in *Bhakti-sadhana* as well as in *Jnana-sadhana* as we have seen, and the duality of utter ignorance; the one is the nearing stage of the Ultimate Unity, while the other has completely hidden the Unity, nay, is taking one farther and farther from it. The duality on which the practice of both *Jnana* and *Bhakti* is founded is not absolutely a datum of ignorance, but has a tentative reality of its own necessitated by the standpoint of relative consciousness. Ultimately the Absolute Unity will be reached, for love brings unification, and the personal love for God will perfect itself into the impersonal Love, where Lover and the Beloved will all be realised as one, without any difference.

The lecturer seems to think that Knowledge and Love are cut-and-dried, separate faculties and the aim of the *Jnani* is to realise the absolute union of Jiva and Brahman by a process of glorified intellection, the ultimate existence reached being the Essence of Intelligence, the *Chit*. But *Chit* is the same as *Ananda* or bliss, which involves Love. The three—Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss—are not attributes of Brahman, these are Its very essence; they are not three separate attributes but three-in-one: the same substance when looked at from the different standpoints of relative existence, relative knowledge, and relative love,—the three basal facts of life—is said to be *Sachchidananda* (Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss). In the ultimate synthesis the difference between Knowledge and Love is resolved into a Unit Substance in which *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, Knowledge and Love,

become convertible terms. There seem to be different powers and faculties on the surface of consciousness, such as moral, æsthetic, intellectual, or emotional, but in their ultimate synthesis they are homogeneous. From the same substance flow all these diverse faculties which constitute the dowry of the human mind.

Love and Knowledge involve and shade into each other by imperceptible gradations. Even in the practice of Knowledge, which includes the hearing, thinking and meditating on the Brahman, Bhagavan

Sankara in the course of explanation says that "As the loving wife meditates on her loving husband, so a kind of eager and continuous remembrance is meant." This involves an element of love and devotion even in the practice of Jnana. The love on which Bhakti is based will also end in the Knowledge of the oneness of all without any difference, when Love, Lover and Beloved will be one. Jnana, based on philosophical reasoning, will culminate in the Essence of Intelligence which will also be realised as Infinite Love. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna pure Love and pure Knowledge are one and the same.

CASTE AND INDIAN CULTURE.

THE Indian civilisation has a distinctness and speciality of its own, and in spite of the bewildering complexity of its outward forms, it is regulated by a supreme norm and inhabited by a soul of its own. The history of its unfoldment stands explained in the light of its peculiar *eidōs*; and from beneath its surface manifestation of political turmoil, confusion and disorganisation, shines the soul—sometimes effulgent, sometimes dimmed in lustre. Western writers and historians find in the Indian people a hopeless mass of contradictions with conflicting races, customs, languages and religions, without any cementing factor binding them together into any approach of unity. It is because they are looking for unity in the outward crust and not in the real soul of the people.

The *raison d'être* of Indian existence is not the perfection of the social state, but perfection in realms of thought and spirituality. The Indian mind is for ever convinced that perfection is not to be at-

tained from without, but is a spontaneous outflow from within. It does not recognise the biological phenomena of natural selection, struggle for existence, and of survival of the fittest as essential for human evolution. These may obtain in the world of animal life, but with the awakening of reason in man, these factors of animal evolution are regulated, nay, sought to be eliminated and transcended, or at any rate kept down within the lowest limits of animal necessity. Social salvation or the elimination of all evil from the outward form of human society is impossible: an objective millennium is a contradiction in terms. That society in course of evolution will attain to such a state when each individual and nation will attain the maximum of power, wealth and prosperity without any limitation is an impossibility. In the realms of finite society, the sum of attainable wealth, power and enjoyment is limited, and the demand has also to be restricted by the inherent limitations of the supply. The limit to

my freedom is set by your freedom, my need for enjoyment is restricted by yours; my wealth means your poverty, my prosperity spells your misfortune. So that the social consciousness of the East is thoroughly imbued with the sense of limitation, balance and measure; hence there is willingness to subordinate the individual to the social good. If individual egoism were allowed unrestricted operation in society, it would create an *impasse*, by a most unequal distribution of wealth and prosperity, of work and leisure; the operation of individual self-interest will disturb the balance of society by the conflict of opposing groups. Hence communalism, which has identified the interests of the individual with those of caste or the social group, forms the characteristic of the stable civilisation of the world.

The point of variation of unrestricted individual action and freedom was not put in the social body. The Indian mind was thoroughly broken in to the conception of the subordination of the individual to the society; hence arose the communalism of Indian society, with its communistic rules of life. The basal idea is that society has a right to dictate to put a curb to my individual passions or ambitions for the sake of the good of the whole social body. And social groupings were made not on the basis of individual and political efficiency but for satisfying the few primary needs, which were kept down to the lowest limits of animal necessity, and primarily for the intellectual and spiritual needs.

But the real point of variation of unshackled freedom was in the realm of spirituality. The Indian mind is individualistic. Our national philosophy of the Vedanta declares not only that all men are

essentially equal, but that all men are divine. The person who realises his immanent divinity is said to attain perfection and is put above all social rules and conduct. The exaltation of the super-social over the social is the characteristic feature of Indian culture and society. Into the super-social state all have the right to enter, and there all are equal and command the allegiance and homage of all grades of society. The perfect right of every one in the super-social state to choose his own path unhampered by dogmas or opinions of any group is recognised and allowed. The theory of *Ishtam* or the chosen Ideal gives freedom to all to follow his own path, and nobody would be persecuted for that. In spite of the diverse religious sects, ideas, and systems of philosophy, the religious genius of the people has discovered the underlying unity of forms of religious thought and declared it as far back as in the Vedas—"एकं सद्भिर्वा बहुधा वदन्ति"—"The truth is one, sages call it variously."—This is the one theme of Indian spiritual thought which has permeated the whole course of historical evolution, giving a wonderful harmonising spirit to its religious culture. All through the course of our history, religious personages have arisen voicing this unity of culture, composing the clash of conflicting sects, and harmonising the manifold schools of religious thought. In the age of the Gita we find Sri Krishna declaring the unity and underlying harmony of all paths leading to the same goal in the words: "In Me they are all threaded like pearls in a string." Sankaracharya did a similar task of unifying the Vedic culture, although on a small scale. Nanak and Kabir also preached the same wonderful vision of unity in religion. Lately, in the nineteenth century, one great sage was born—Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahansa—whose life, more than his teaching, was the embodiment of the whole culture of the nation, who showed the unity and harmony of the Vedic, the Puranic and Tantric elements of Indian culture.

If the union of a people lies in the unity of a common heritage of traditions and ideals, it is abundantly present in Indian culture, nay, the whole genius of the people has been devoted in the long course of its history to discover and keep it shining. As the Swami Vivekananda says, "Union in India means a union of hearts that beat to the same spiritual tune." The common bases of Hinduism have been emphasised anew, its unity brought out in bold relief and placed before the unobstructed gaze of all. That was the life-work of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The discovery of the unity of Indian life and culture was their persistent search and their brightest achievement. The only condition of a healthy existence for us lies in recognising these common bases and our practicality in working them out in their details.

In our spiritual and ethical culture a unity has been maintained in the midst of a wonderful variety and manifoldness of religious thought, an infinite liberty to think and live in our own way. Before this unity all distinctions of language, race, and social custom melt away. The ethnic types which form the physical body of Indian civilisation are made up of various elements, in the composition of which the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Greek, the Hun, the Chin and the Scythian have poured their blood. But all have been brought under the sway and stamped by the impress of Aryan culture, and welded into a homogeneous body. "In India race

difficulties, melt away before the unifying power of religion." So long as the consciousness of this unity of religious thought remains, differences of race, language and social customs do not constitute separatistic factors; the Indian mind bridges over the gulf and finds the consciousness of unity in the unification of religion. The real bond is the bond of religion.

The Indian mind distrustful of the free and unchecked play of the individual passions in the realm of society, has hedged in the individual within the barrier of communalism. The interests of the individual are identified with those of the family and of the caste to which he belongs. In India, progress in the social scale is achieved by the progress of the whole group, and any caste which appropriates the culture or the qualities of a higher one rises in the social scale and there is nothing to prevent it. But caste, when it degenerates into an exclusive body claiming exclusive privileges and denying right to others, becomes an anti-social factor. Then instead of being a training-ground for undeveloped souls, instead of being stepping-stones to the attainment of the equality of the spirit, it undermines the foundations of the super-social. That one class should make a close reserve of intellectuality, another of wealth, and refuse access to others, constitutes the tragedy of human history. It is when classes in society petrify into exclusive rings that they are a check against healthy class-formation which is the soul of all society, and become the germ of social evil. There should be opportunity for the healthy uprise of the lower classes to the higher ones as they attain the higher level of social improvement. Society is ever renewing itself from the base. As the higher ones go up the scale, the lower orders also come up and

take the place of those that have gone up. But the tragedy of human society is that when real worth which raised a class of people to a high social scale has degenerated, that class seeks to protect its privileges by the creation of outward barriers, and lays claim to *exclusive* privileges, thus hindering the play of healthy caste-formation. As Swami Vivekananda says: "Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not caste. The original idea of caste was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his *jati*, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. The present caste is not the real *jati*, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of *jati*, that is, caste or variation."

We have now to translate the freedom and equality of the spiritual thought to society. This freedom and equality will no doubt manifest itself through the forms of communistic life prevalent in Indian society, but it will deal a death-blow to all exclusive privileges that attempt to make a close reserve of intellectuality, of wealth, or of social liberty. The oneness of Vedantic thought, the divinity of man, has to be practically worked out in the social body, for the uplift of the masses of India. It will enjoin on the Brahmana to distribute his culture, his intellectuality to the masses, and it will enjoin on the Sudra not to seek to pull down the Bráhmāna to his level but to rise in the social scale by appropriating the culture and the spirituality of the Bráhmāna. It will enjoin on each caste to serve the social body by means of its peculiar endowment of qualities.

Indeed that has always been the process of caste-formation in India. When any number of men adopt the occupation

and *achara* and the culture of a higher caste, they separate themselves from their caste and form a group of their own, regarding themselves as of a higher status, and in course of a generation or two, society recognises it. In India, the rise in the social scale is brought about not by the rise of individual members who make common cause with higher caste, but the rise in social status of the whole group to which the individual belongs.

Therefore, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "The time is come when the Advaita is to be worked out practically. The Vedānta has to be brought down from heaven to the earth—this is the present dispensation." Castes will remain, our communal system of life will remain, but in and through all will be felt the bond of unity and the play of social love. For does not our philosophy say that we are all one with the same Lord, that the Divine indwells in every being? The lesson will be taught to each caste to have mutual love and respect and the consciousness of each caste being great in its own place. The glory of the higher castes will lie in serving the social body in the spirit of the Lord immanent and raising the lower classes to the higher level. The lower castes also, instead of trying to level the higher ones, will rise by absorbing their culture. Claims of exclusive privileges, attempts to shut out sections of people from exclusive reserves will be discountenanced, and opportunities should be given to all to rise in the scale by appropriating the highest culture of the land. All barriers should be taken away from the path of individuals expressing their nature, there will be equal chances for all, and scope will be left open to ensure the healthy up-rise of races low in the scale of culture.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali.)

CXLIII.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1895.

Dear and beloved,

I have now got lots of newspapers etc. and you need not send any more. Let the movement now confine itself to India. * *

It isn't much use getting up a sensation every day. But avail yourselves of this stir that is rife all over the country, and scatter yourselves in all quarters. In other words, try to start branches at different places. Let it not be an empty sound merely. You must join the Madrasees and start associations etc. at different places. What about the magazine which I heard was going to be started? Why are you nervous about conducting it? * * Come! Do something heroic. Brother, what if you do not attain Mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue—

“मनासि यच्चसि काये पुण्यपीयुषपूर्णः।

विभुवनमुपकारश्रेणीभिः प्रीयमानः।

परमुणपरमाणुं पर्वसीकृत्य केचित्।

निजद्वि विकसन्तः सन्ति सन्तः कियन्तः ॥”

—There are some saints who full of holiness in thought, word, and deed, please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts, and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as a mountain.

What if you don't get Mukti? What childish prattle! Lord! They say, even the venom of a snake loses its power by firmly denying it. Isn't it true? What queer humility is this to say, 'I know nothing!' 'I am nothing!' This is pseudo-renunciation and mock-modesty, I tell you. Off with such a self-debasing spirit! 'If I do not know, who on earth does! What have you been doing,

so long, if you now plead ignorance? These are the words of an atheist,—the humility of a vagabond wretch. We can do everything, and will do everything! He who is fortunate enough will heroically join us, letting the worthless mew like cats from their corner. — writes, "Well, you have had enough of blazoning. Now come back home." I would have called — a man if he could build a house and call me. Ten years' experience of such things has made me wiser. I am no more to be duped by words. Let him who has courage in his mind and love in his heart come with me, I want none else. Through Mother's grace, single-handed I am worth a hundred thousand now and will be worth two millions. * * There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there one must live among fools—there is this difference as of the poles. People of this country organise and work, while *our* undertakings all come to dust clashing against laziness—mis-called 'renunciation'—and jealousy etc. — writes me big letters now and then, half of which I cannot decipher, which is a blessing to me. For a great part of the news is of the following description—that in such and such place such and such a man was speaking ill of me, and that he, being unable to bear the same, had a quarrel with him, and so forth. Many thanks for his kind defence of me. But what seriously hinders me from listening to what particular people may be saying about me is —“स्वल्पं कालो बहवश्च विप्राः”—Time is short, but the obstacles are many. * *

An organised society is wanted. Let — look to the household management, — take charge of money matters and marketing,

and — act as secretary, that is, carry on correspondence etc. Make a permanent centre, —it is no use making random efforts as you are doing now. Do you see my point? I have quite a heap of newspapers, now I want you to do something. If you can build a Math, I shall say you are heroes; otherwise you are nothing. Consult the Madras people when you work. They have a great capacity for work. Celebrate this year's Sri Ramakrishna Festival with such eclat as to make it a record. The less the feeding propaganda is, the better. It is enough if you have hand-to-hand distribution of the Prasada. * *

I am going to write a very short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and translated into Bengali and sell it at the Festival, — people do not read books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the Festival done with great pomp. * *

You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work. In any towns or villages you may visit, start an association wherever you find a number of people revering Sri Ramakrishna. Have you travelled through so many villages all for nothing? We must slowly absorb the Hari Sabhas and such other associations. Well, I cannot tell you all,—if I could but get another demon like me! The Lord will supply me everything in time. * * If one has got power, he must manifest it in action. * * Off with your ideas of Mukti and Bhakti! There is only one way in the world,—“परोपकाराय हि सत्तां जीवित्,” “परायै प्राप्त उन्मुञ्जेत्।”—The good live for others alone. The wise man should sacrifice himself for others. I can secure my own good only by doing your good. There is no other way, none whatsoever. * * You are God, I am God, and man is God. It is this God manifested through humanity who is doing everything in this world. Is there a different God sitting high up somewhere? To work, therefore!

B— has sent me a book written by S—

From a perusal of that work B— has come to know that all the people of this world are impure and that they are by their very nature debarred from having a jot of religion; that only the handful of Brāhmanas that are in India have the sole right to it, and among these again, S— and B— are the sun and moon, so to speak. Bravo! What a powerful religion indeed! In Bengal specially, that sort of a religion is very easy to practise. There is no easier way than that. The whole truth about austerities and spiritual exercises is, in a nutshell, that I am pure and all the rest are impure! A beastly, demoniac, hellish religion this! If the American people are unfit for religion, if it is improper to preach religion here, why then ask their help? * * What can remedy such a disease? Well, tell S— to go to Malabar. The Raja there has taken his subjects' land and offered it at the feet of Brāhmanas. There are big monasteries in every village, where sumptuous dinners are given, supplemented by presents in cash. * * There is no harm in touching the non-Brahmin classes when it serves one's purpose, and when you have done with it you bathe, for the non-Brahmins are as a class unholy and must never be touched on other occasions! Monks and Sannyasins and Brahmanas of a certain type have thrown the country into ruin. Intent all the while on theft and wickedness, these pose as preachers of religion! They will take gifts from the people and at the same time cry, 'Don't touch me!' And what great things they have been doing!—"If a potato happens to touch a brinjal, how long will the universe last before it is deluged?" "If they do not apply earth a dozen times to clean their hands, will fourteen generations of ancestors go to hell, or twenty-four?"—For intricate problems like these they have been finding out scientific explanations for the last two thousand years,—while one-fourth of the people are starving. A girl of eight is

married to a man of thirty and the parents are jubilant over it. And if anyone protests against it, the plea is put forward, 'Our religion is being overturned.' What sort of a religion have they who want to see their girls becoming mothers before they attain puberty even, and offer scientific explanations for it? Many, again, lay the blame at the door of the Muhammedans. They are to blame, indeed! Just read the *Grihya Sutras* through and see what is given as the marriagable age of a girl. * * There it is expressly stated that a girl must be married very young. The entire *Grihya Sutras* enjoin this.

And in the Vedic *Aswamedha* sacrifice worse things would be done. All the *Brâhmanas* mention them, and all the commentators admit them to be true. How can you deny them?

What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many good things in the ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future India—must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of Modern India and of the Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart!

Hence, when you call Sri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, and at the same breath plead your ignorance, unhesitatingly I say, "You are false to the backbone!" If Ramakrishna Paramahansa be true, you also are true. But you must show. * * In you all there is tremendous power.—The atheist has nothing but rubbish in him.—Those who are believers are heroes. They will manifest tremendous power. The world will be swept before them.—"Sympathy and help to the poor;"—"Man is God, he is Narayana;"—"In Atman there is no distinction of male or female, of Brahmana or Kshatriya, and the like;"—"All is Narayana from the Creator down to a clump of grass." The worm is

less manifested, the Creator more manifested. Every action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more is *good*, every action that retards it is *evil*.

The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others do the same.

If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong.

In other words, a Brahmana is not so much in need of education as a Chandâla. If the son of a Brahmana needs one teacher, that of a Chandâla needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with acute intellect from birth. It is a mad man who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the down-trodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

A dreadful slough is in front of you—take care; many fall into it and die. The slough is this, that the present religion of the Hindus is not in the Vedas, nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti—religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of the Hindus is neither the path of Knowledge nor that of Reason,—it is "Don't-touchism."—"Don't touch me!" "Don't touch me!"—that exhausts its description. See that you do not lose your lives in this dire irreligion of "Don't-touchism." Must the teaching आत्मवत्सर्वभूतेषु—"Looking upon all beings as your own self"—be confined to books alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those who become impure at the mere breath of others, purify others? Don't-touchism is a form of mental disease. Beware! All expansion is life, all contraction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is the only law of life, just as you breathe to live,

This the secret of selfless love, selfless action and the rest. * * Try to help S—if you can, in any way. He is a very good and pious man, but is of a narrow heart. It does not fall to the lot of all to feel for the misery of others. Good Lord! Of all Incarnations Lord Chaitanya was the greatest, but he was comparatively lacking in Knowledge; in the Ramakrishna Incarnation there is Knowledge, Devotion and Love—infinite Knowledge, infinite Love, infinite Work, infinite Compassion for

all beings. You have not yet been able to understand him. “श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित्”—Even learning about Him, most people do not understand Him. What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, he *lived* in one life. His life is the living commentary to the *Vedas* of all nations. People will come to know him by degrees. My old watchword—struggle, struggle up to light! Onward!

Yours in service,
Vivekananda.

WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

II.

THE Swami Abhedananda did not mix with his students as freely as some of the other Swamis have done. It is true he held social meetings where the students could freely talk and mix with him and he gave one hour each week to meeting personal enquiries, but by nature he was always more or less reserved and in private life he was not easily accessible. He insisted on a certain amount of privacy. This was probably wise and necessary on his part. He gave himself heart and soul to his work and he needed hours of solitude to prosecute his studies and to prepare his carefully thought-out lectures free from outside disturbances. But one could always be assured of his ready assistance, his sympathy and encouragement when one made it a point to approach him.

I rarely visited the Swami in his own rooms but on many occasions I found it possible to have very close and intimate talks with him, when he would give me most valuable advice.

In years there cannot have been much difference between us. The Swami may be my senior by five or six years at the most. But I regarded him as a wise and loving father, a guide who understood my struggles and difficulties and I felt that he loved me as a son. I was exceedingly happy to have found a teacher who had realised that for which I was striving. I considered myself greatly blessed to be guided by one of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples. And sometimes when shaking hands with the Swami, I thought, 'Now I am touch-

ing the same hand that has done service to the great Master.'

At times, I have doubted whether we can be really helped by others spiritually, whether progress does not depend entirely on our own effort and whether help does not come only from within. But as I look back over the many years that I have known the Swami, I must confess that a teacher is almost always necessary to us. Without sincerity, without effort on our own part, it is true, no help will avail. But a teacher can show us the way. He can open our eyes, can make us see in the right direction and by his advice and encouragement can stimulate our efforts. And where there is a happy relationship between master and disciple, progress is greatly facilitated. Not in vain do the Hindu scriptures advise association with the wise; not in vain do these scriptures ask the student to love and revere his teacher and if possible to render him humble service. "That wisdom the wise beholders of the truth will teach thee by thy reverencing, asking and serving them." Gita iv. 34.

We have to dig and we have to dig hard, but it is of great value to have it pointed out to us where and how we have to dig. Without guidance the road is difficult to find and hard to travel. "That ancient, narrow path stretching far away, it is sharp as the edge of a razor and hard to pass over; dangerous is that path for mortals to tread." Has any one found it different? It is therefore that the Rishi added: "Arise, awake, seek out the

great ones and get understanding." Shall we then not be filled with love and devotion towards those who stretch out a helping hand to us? Can our gratitude ever repay what they have done for us?

Gradually I became acquainted with my fellow-students, an acquaintance which in some cases has ripened into close friendship. These were happy days, these early days of sincere and enthusiastic search for wisdom and realisation. There was so much to learn, to read, to discuss. It was a new life, a quickened life, a lifting of the mind into new regions of thought and being. We were on the alert. Every scrap of information, every new book or picture was to us a source of real happiness and inspiration.

We heard about the Master, Sri Ramakrishna, how he had struggled and wept for his Divine Mother, how day and night he prayed for Her vision, how he forgot food and sleep and even his body in his yearning search for Her; and how at last the battle was won, the body was subdued and the Mother revealed Herself in all Her glory. What inspiration we drew from the account of that holy and perfected life! And then came the story of the greatest of his disciples, the Swami Vivekananda, whom then we had not met. How swept onward by a spiritual torrent he, then a mere boy, ran one day to Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar to put to the sage the startling question: "Sir, have you seen God?" And the Master's reply: "Yes, my boy, I have seen God and I shall lead you on the way that you may also see Him." Is it strange that we hung on the words of him who brought these revelations to us? Is it strange that we feel eternally grateful to him who thus quickened our spirit? I, for one, pray that I may never forget and that I may never lose my gratitude for the help received from the Swami Abhedananda in these early days.

I had now become a sincere student of Vedanta. Externally my life was uneventful, an even flow of routine life. I followed my occupation which involved little effort and left me much time to pursue my study and practice of Vedanta. I spent much time at the Vedanta headquarters where I tried to make myself useful to some extent and I was in close contact with the Swami. I did not miss a single lecture or class. And I

used to go to the Swami for help when I was in doubt or difficulty. How patient and kind the Swami always was!

The Swami taught us how to meditate, he taught us how to pray. "From the unreal lead us into the Real, from darkness lead us into Light, from death lead us into Immortality; come to us, thou Destroyer of all ignorance and protect us by thy compassionate face for ever and ever, protect us from all evil thoughts and desires and let us always remember that we are Spirit divine." What a wonderful prayer! Who uttered this prayer first, when and where? To answer this question we would have to look far back through the centuries of Indian history. Was it first wrung from the heart of a Rishi rapt in meditation on the bank of the Ganges? The earliest record of this prayer is found, I believe, in the Brihadāranyaka, one the oldest Upanishads. And ever since, for thirty centuries or more, it has been on the lips and in the hearts of the Hindus. And now at last this ancient prayer had come to us in the West.

To be able to cry out from the bottom of one's heart: Lead us into the Real, lead us into Light, make us Immortal, make us remember that we are Spirit, and to get even a faint response,—what bliss unspeakable! "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of mortal man the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him."

When you meditate, said the Swami, remember first the great teachers of the world. They have given us the greatest of all gifts, the highest truth. Remember the greatest of all teachers, the Teacher of the universe. Aspire to be His faithful servant. Send thoughts of love to all living beings, pray that all may be happy and peaceful and blissful. Then think of your body, remember, it is the instrument of the soul. We must keep it strong and healthy and make it a useful instrument; we must master the body so that through it we can express our divine nature. Breathe slowly and rhythmically; imagine that you breathe out all that is evil and weak and undesirable and that with every breath you draw in, the divine nature is flowing through you. Then meditate on Him who is the Soul of your soul. Try to feel that you are one with that Infinite, Blissful, Existence, etc.

These were some of the invaluable lessons we received from the Swami.

Unventful and easy-going as my external life was, internally it was a life of great activity, but activity that brought rest and peace, calm and happiness.

I used to visit one or two of my Vedanta friends and we would talk till late hours in the night. And often on holidays I would jump on my bicycle and with one of Swamiji's books in my pocket would set out for a secluded spot in forest or on the sea-shore, where I would read and meditate. There I would pass the day alone. Sometimes one of the Swami's most devoted disciples, one of Swami Vivekananda's Brahmacharis, would accompany me. I valued his company for he knew much about Swamiji and he would tell me all about him. He was very devotional. His little room was like a shrine. The walls were decorated with pictures of the different Swamis. In one corner was a little altar with more pictures and candles and incense. He chanted very beautifully and many an hour I have spent there. We talked and read and meditated there together.

At other times, three of us would go on excursions together. A mountain, some twenty or thirty miles from New York, was our favourite haunt. We would go there some Saturday afternoon, after business hours, take lunch with us and spend the whole night on the top of the mountain. We fixed up a little altar from stones, placed on it the pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and the Swamis, lit a fire, burned incense and meditated. Not another soul was near. The view from the mountain was beautiful over a flat prosperous country,—green fields, spotted with villages. The following morning we would watch the sun rise and one of us would chant, "Tat saviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodyât." "Let us meditate on that adorable and self-effulgent light of Him who has produced this universe; may He enlighten our hearts." And later in the morning faint sounds would reach our ears, as the church bells rang in the distant villages, summoning the devotees to worship. We thoroughly enjoyed these excursions.

And so days passed and weeks and months; it may have been a year. And then the Swami asked us a question that came as a surprise to us,—

a surprise that filled our hearts with joy. He called to himself four of his students and asked them whether they were willing and ready to take the vow of life-long celibacy, whether we were ready to join that most ancient order of Brahmacharis to which all the sages of India belonged. And thus, blessing upon blessing the Swami bestowed upon us. We all consented; we were eager to enlist ourselves for a holy life.

Yes, these were happy days, these early days of spiritual awakening and enthusiasm, now almost twenty years ago. It is pleasant to look back and call them to mind again. It is sweet to remember those days of childlike trust and innocence and longing for holiness. Where are they gone, those days of hope mingled with assurance, when in the flush of our youth we felt that the goal could not be far off? It is not always so pleasant to compare the past with the present. Still, it may be profitable even though it hurts, even though sometimes it wrings our hearts. And at such times it is perhaps a consolation to remember that—as the Swami Abhedananda once told me—spiritual progress is not in a straight line, it is spiral and the downward curve even is on the way to progress. While the fruit is growing we can watch its development almost day by day. But when the fruit has attained its full size, the ripening process is hardly perceptible.

Life cannot be continuous sunshine. And so in our spiritual life there comes a lull after the fresh breeze and we seem to have come to a standstill. The energy seems lacking, insufficient to overthrow the obstacles. Swept along, carried, as it were, on the wings of a strong urge from within, all is smooth sailing. But the time comes, perhaps to everyone, at least for sometime, that we lose vital interest and we find ourselves stranded. We have met with what is called, "the obstacles to Yoga,"—"the dark night of the soul," the mystics call it.

But of this we knew little then. We did not trouble ourselves about the past or the future, we lived in the present. Neither did deep philosophical questions disturb our peace of mind,—the why and how of things. We had grasped a few fundamental truths; these truths we embraced, these truths we wanted to realise and to live. Subtle arguments were not yet undermining our

faith, the mind was not yet thrown into that endless tumult of inward questioning, building up theories to-day, tearing them down to-morrow, constructing and demolishing in turn,—vain struggle of the ego, the battle between heart and intellect. Blessed indeed are they who pass over this stage quickly, till in humility and resignation their ears are opened to the blessed assurance: "My child, you need not know much in order to please Me. Only love me dearly. Speak to Me, as you would talk to your mother, if she had taken you in her arms."

In the days of which I write now we seemed to walk on air, we felt strong and buoyant and able to meet all obstacles. Could there be anything too difficult with such a goal in view? We hoped that the Swami would make the vows very strong and binding; they could not be too strict for us. "But if we cannot keep the vows inviolate?" one of us remarked. "We must and we shall keep our vows inviolate!" was the impetuous reply. "And anyhow it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," was the opinion of a third.

Do I see you smile, dear reader? Remember, we were not children; we were young, but fully grown up; we had seen life in different phases; little was hidden from us. Well! I also smile, but it is a smile of satisfaction, for perhaps we were children after all. And Jesus loved children. Perhaps he also looked kindly on us; for in those days we were very simple. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," Jesus said, "and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. . . . And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them." At least we knocked, even if the door was not thrown wide open; at least we ran, if we did not get the first prize. "No effort is lost," says the Lord Sri Krishna. And we will trust in His words.

And so it came to pass that on the first day of April, in the year 1899, we were initiated. It was Easter Sunday, the great Christian festival, the feast of Christ's resurrection. A few friends, Brahmacharis of the Swami Vivekananda, were invited to witness the ceremony. It took place at the home of one of the students, in the room

where we were in the habit of meeting for meditation. It was all very simple, but none the less impressive.

It was evening. The room had been lighted up and was fragrant with the fume of burning incense. The picture of Sri Ramakrishna had been placed on a small altar covered with green cloth and decorated with flowers. We placed our humble offering of fruits and flowers on the same altar. And before this picture we meditated and bowed down before we performed the homa and took the vows. The altar fire was burning. The Swami read Slokas from Hindu scriptures, selected by him for the occasion. Then he chanted Sanskrit verses in adoration of Sri Ramakrishna. These verses were his own composition and are often chanted by the devotees in India. Then the Swami asked us whether we realised that the step we were about to take was a serious step. He pointed out to us that the order we were about to join was the most ancient order in existence; that the rules of this order were universal and observed by all the sages all over the world; that the badge of this order was purity and that to dishonor this badge was great sin.

He pointed out to us that by joining the order, we were entering upon a new life. As Brahmacharis we had to try, with all our might, to conquer and control our passions, not only lust, but also anger and jealousy, hatred and greed; we should try to realise the divinity in every one and to love all beings equally; we should try to follow the ideal of non-killing, non-injuring others and truthfulness; we had to be chaste in word, thought and deed and always to remember the sexless Spirit; we were to renounce marriage and to avoid temptations and not to run after sense-pleasures; we should always keep in mind that we were Spirit divine. And remember, the Swami said, you are consecrating your life for the good of all and for the service of God.

The Swami then asked the other Brahmacharis who were present, whether there was any objection to our entering the order. No! there was no objection. Then, one by one, we were asked to approach the sacred fire and to repeat the vows after the Swami, with the customary invocation and oblation of clarified butter into the fire.

This part of the ceremony over, the Swami touched our foreheads with sacred ashes. We received a piece of ghera (ochre) cloth and then with the sprinkling of holy water the Swami gave us our spiritual names: Muktikama, Shantikama, Satyakama and Gurudasa. The meaning of the names was explained. Seeker of freedom, seeker

of peace, seeker of Truth and servant of the Master.

The ceremony was over. The old Brahmacharis greeted us as new members of the order and the Swami gave us some of the fruit offerings to break our fast of the day. And then, after some pleasant and genial talk we parted and went home.

A BRAHMACHARIN.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 237.)

देहीऽहमित्येव जडस्य बुद्धि-

देहे च जीवे चिद्वपस्त्वहंभीः ।

विवेकात्मानवता महात्मना

ब्रह्माहमित्येव मतिः सदात्मनि ॥१६०॥

160. The stupid man thinks he is the body, the book-learned man identifies himself with the mixture of body and soul, while the great man possessed of Realisation due to discrimination, looks upon the eternal Atman as his Self, and thinks, "I am Brahman."

Three classes of people are distinguished in this Sloka, of whom the Advaitist is of course given the highest place.

Mixture of body and soul—The average man thinks he is both body and mind acting in unison.]

अब्रह्मबुद्धिस्तत्र सृष्टयुजे

त्वङ्मांसमदेर्मांसपुत्रीपराशौ ।

सर्वात्मनि ब्रह्मणि निर्विकल्पे

कुरुष्व शान्तिं परमां भजस्व ॥१६१॥

161. O foolish one, cease to identify thyself with this bundle of skin, flesh, fat, bones and filth, and identify thyself instead with the Absolute Brahman, the Self of all, and thus attain to supreme Peace.

देहेन्द्रियादावस्मिन् भ्रमादितानां

विद्वानहंतां न जहाति यावत् ।

मानसं मन्यन्स्ति विमुक्तिवार्ता-

त्यस्त्वेव वेदान्तनयान्तदर्शी ॥१६२॥

162. As long as the book-learned man does not give up his mistaken identification with the body and organs etc., which are unreal, there is no talk of emancipation even for him, be he ever so erudite in the Vedanta and morals.

[*Body and organs etc.*—In fact, the whole objective world.

Erudite etc.—Mere book-learning is meant. Unless he has realised the state of oneness, he will be a mere talker, that is all.]

छायाशरीरे प्रतिविम्बगात्रे

यत्स्वप्नदेहे हृदि कल्पिताङ्गे ।

यथात्मबुद्धिस्तत्र नास्ति काचि-

जीवच्छरीरे च तथैव मास्तु ॥१६३॥

163. Just as thou dost not identify thyself with the shadow-body, the image-body, the dream-body, or the body thou hast in the imaginations of thy heart, cease thou to do likewise with the living body also.

[*Shadow-body*—The shadow of thy body.

Image-body—the image or reflection of thy body, cast in water etc.

Dream-body—the body that thou mayst assume in dreams.

Living-body—the gross body, with the Pranas etc.]

देहात्मधीरेव नृणां प्रसङ्गिणां

जन्मादिदुःखप्रभवस्य बीजम् ।

यतस्ततस्त्वं जहि तां प्रयत्ना-

त्यक्ते तु चित्ते न पुनर्भवादा ॥१६४॥

164. The identification with the body alone is the root which produces the misery of birth etc., of people who are attached to the unreal; therefore destroy thou this with the utmost care. When this identification caused by the mind is given up, there is no more chance for rebirth.

[Compare Chhandogya Upa. VIII. xii. 1.]

कर्मेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिरश्रितांश्च

प्राणो भवेत्प्राणमयस्तु कोशः ।

येनात्मवानन्नमयोऽनुपूर्णः

प्रवर्त्ततेऽसौ सकलक्रियासु ॥१६५॥

165. The Prana, with which we are all familiar, coupled with the five organs of action, forms the Vital Sheath, permeated by which the Material Sheath engages itself in all activities as if it were living.

[*Organs of action*—The brain centres which control speech, manual activity, locomotion, excretion and reproduction. See Sloka 92.

Material Sheath—described in Slokas 154. and following.

This activity which the Vital Sheath is here said to impart is again a borrowed one, as will appear from the last line of the next Sloka.

For a description of the Five Kosas (Sheaths) the reader is referred to the Taittiriya Upa., second Valli or chapter.]

नैवात्मापि प्राणमयो वायुविकारो

गन्ताऽऽगन्ता वायुवदन्तर्बहिरेव ॥

यस्मात्किञ्चित्कापि न वेत्तीष्टमनिष्टं

स्वं वान्यं वा किञ्चन नित्यं परतन्त्रः ॥१६६॥

166. Neither is the Vital Sheath the Self—because it is a modification of Vayu and like the air it enters into and comes out of the body, and because it never knows in the least either its own weal and woe or those of others, being eternally dependent on the Self.

[*Vāyu*: The Prāna-Vāyu or life-force is meant here. The word commonly means air, which brings in the comparison with the air in the next line.

Enters into &c.—i. e. as breath, which is its gross manifestation.]

ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि च मनश्च मनोमयः स्या

त्कोशो ममाहमिति चस्तुष्टिकल्पहेतुः ।

संज्ञादिभेदकलनाकारितो वर्त्तमानः-

स्तत्पूर्वकोशमभिपूर्य विजृम्भते यः ॥१६७॥

167. The organs of knowledge together with the mind form the Mental Sheath,—the cause of the diversity of things, such as 'I' and 'mine.' It is powerful and endued with the faculty of creating differences of name etc. It manifests itself as permeating the preceding, i. e. Vital Sheath.

[*Organs of knowledge*—The brain centres which control sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. See Sloka 92.]

पञ्चेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिरेव होतृभिः

प्रचीयमानो विषयाज्यधारया ॥

जाज्वल्यमानो बहुवासनेन्द्वनै-

र्मनोमयाग्निर्वहति प्रपञ्चम् ॥१६८॥

168. The Mental Sheath is the (sacrificial) fire which, fed with the fuel of desires by the five sense-organs which serve as priests, and set ablaze by the sense-objects which act as the stream of oblations, brings about this phenomenal universe.

[The sacrificial fire confers on the Yajamāna, or the man who performs the sacrifice, the enjoyments of the heavenly spheres. So the mind also confers on the Jiva or individualised Ego the pleasures of the objective world.

It is the mind that projects the objective universe—this is the plain meaning. See Sloka 170, below.]

न ह्यस्त्यविद्या मनसोऽतिरिक्ता

मनो ह्यविद्या भवबन्धहेतुः ।

तस्मिन्विनष्टे सकलं विनष्टं

विजृम्भितेऽस्मिन्सकलं विजृम्भते ॥१६९॥

169. There is no Ignorance (Avidyā) outside the mind. The mind is Avidyā, the cause of the bondage of transmigration. When that is destroyed, all else is destroyed, and when it manifests, everything else manifests.

[According to Vedānta, there is no actual change in the Self, which is by nature pure and perfect. It is Ignorance or Avidyā that has covered its vision, so to say and it appears as limited and subject to change. Now, this ignorance is imbedded in the mind. When the mind is thoroughly purified through Sadhana or discipline, the glory of the Atman manifests itself. This is said to be liberation.

Destroyed—in the highest or Nirvikālpa Samadhi.]

स्वप्नेऽर्धशून्ये सृजति स्वराकस्या

भोक्त्रादिविधं मन एव सर्वम् ।

तथैव जाग्रदपि नो विशेष-

स्तत्सर्वमेतन्मनसो विजृम्भणम् ॥१७०॥

170. In dreams, when there is no actual contact with the external world, the mind alone creates the whole universe consisting of the enjoyer etc. And similarly in the waking state also,—there is no difference. Therefore all this (phenomenal universe) is the projection of the mind.

[The enjoyer etc.—i. e., the enjoyer, the enjoyable and enjoyment: subject, object and their coming into relation.]

सुषुप्तिकाले मनसि प्रलीने

नैवास्ति किञ्चित्सकलप्रसिद्धेः ।

मतो मनःकल्पित एव पुंसः

संसार एतस्य न वस्तुतोऽस्ति ॥१७१॥

171. In dreamless sleep, when the mind is reduced to its causal state, there exists nothing (for the person asleep), as is evident from universal experience. Hence man's relative existence is simply the creation of the mind, and has no objective reality.

[Universal experience—The subject has been touched on already. See Sloka 121, ante.]

वायुनाऽऽनीयते मेघः पुनस्तेनैव नीयते ।

मनसा कल्प्यते बन्धो मोक्षस्तेनैव कल्प्यते ॥१७२॥

172. Clouds are brought in by the wind and again driven away by the same agency. Similarly, man's bondage is caused by the

mind and Liberation too is caused by that alone.

देहादिसर्वविषये परिकल्प्य रागं

बध्नाति तेन पुरुषं पशुवद्गुणेन ।

वैरस्यमत्र विपत्रस्तुविधाय पश्चा-

देनं विमोचयति तन्मन एव बन्धात् ॥१७३॥

173. It (first) creates an attachment in man for the body and all other sense-objects, and binds him through that attachment like a beast by means of ropes. Afterwards, the self-same mind creates in the individual an utter distaste for these sense-objects and frees him from the bondage.

[For the double meaning of the word *Guna*, see note on Sloka 76.]

तस्मान्मनः कारणमस्य जन्तो-

बन्धस्य मोक्षस्य च वा विधाने ।

बन्धस्य हेतुर्मज्जिनं रजोगुणै-

र्मोक्षस्य शुद्धं विरजस्तमस्कम् ॥१७४॥

174. Therefore the mind is the only cause that brings about man's bondage or liberation : when tainted by the effects of Rajas it leads to bondage, and when pure and divested of the Rajas and Tamas elements it conduces to Liberation.

[A reminiscence of the second Sloka of Amrita-bindu Upan.]

विवेकवैराग्यगुणातिरेका-

च्छुद्धत्वमासाद्य मनो विमुक्त्यै ।

भवत्यतो बुद्धिमतो मुमुक्षो-

स्ताभ्यां दृढाभ्यां भवितव्यमग्रे ॥१७५॥

175. Attaining purity through the preponderance of Discrimination and Renunciation, the mind makes for Liberation. Hence the wise seeker after liberation must first strengthen these two.

[Discrimination—between Self and Non-Self, Renunciation—of the Non-self.]

(To be continued.)

REVIEWS.

The Renaissance in India. By James H. Cousins.

Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras.

Pp. 294. Cloth-bound. Price not mentioned.

Professor Cousins has already made a name as a poet and critic and it is a pleasure to go through the pages of this delightful book. It consists of eleven chapters, the first of which has given its title to the book. The other subjects dealt with are: "The Arts in Nation-building," "Some Indian Art-origins," "The Bengal Painters: First Impressions—1916," Do.—"Second Impressions—1918," "Ruskin, the Indian Race and Indian Art," "Literary Ideals," "Philosophy and Poetry," "Religion and the Renaissance," "The Poetry of Sarojini Naidu," and "The Orientation of Western Literature." Unlike Western critics in general, Prof. Cousins views India with an eye of sympathy and reverence and has therefore found ample signs of the awakening in the country. And he records his impressions in a picturesque style which compels the reader's attention. The author is an enthusiastic admirer of "the Tagore poetry and the Tagore paintings," of which religion, he says, is the mainspring. In the essay "Religion and Renaissance" Prof. Cousins sets a high value on Arthur Avalon's Tantra publications, but one sadly misses any mention of the Vedantic revival which the Swami Vivekananda, inspired by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, has inaugurated in India, the effects of which are seen not merely in the production of a Vedantic literature adapted to the understanding of the present generation, but which has also deeply influenced the foundations of social working. Great credit is due to Arthur Avalon for bringing the harmony of the Tantras into prominence, but what about the man who *realised* through austere practice the truths not only of the Tantras, but of the Upanishads and Puranas as well, and whose whole life was an illustration of those principles? And what should one say of the man who interpreted this wonderful life before India and the whole world, and who represented all that was glorious in ancient India and all that is potentially great in the India of today? Has the learned and sympathetic Professor never heard of the Swami Vivekananda, who made

the highest truths of the Vedanta *practical*, and whose inspiration has brought into existence the various Homes of Service and Relief Organisations within the country? We are confident that the author, as he searches further and further for the mainspring of the Renaissance in India, will surely hit upon this potent force and find in the twin-personalities of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda the explanation of the cultural revival that is going on in the country. As it is, however, we have no hesitation in recommending this thoughtful and excellent book to all English-knowing people.

Survival of Hindu Civilisation—Part I. (The Impoverishment of India and its Remedy). By Pramatha Nath Bose. Pp. xlvii + 81. Price Re. 1/8.

This is a welcome addition to the series of thoughtful books which Mr. Pramatha Nath Bose has written on Indian subjects. Besides the Introduction, which covers over a third of the book, there are four chapters, dealing with Indications of Prosperity, those of Impoverishment, its Chief Causes, and the Remedy. Under the last head the author recommends with reasoning "the industrial regeneration of India on improved methods by indigenous agency" and "stemming the tide of Western Civilisation so as to reduce the imports of foreign manufactures." Discussion on such subjects is assuredly good, but practice is infinitely better. We want a body of enthusiastic and sacrificing men who will show these things in practice. It is the moral strength that counts in the long run. The book is published by Messrs. W. Newman & Co., 4 Dalhousie Square, Calcutta, and is a bit costly for its size.

Muhammad Ali—His Life and Services to his country.—With a Foreword by C. P. Ramaswami Iyer B. A. B. L. Publishers Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 135. Price Re. 1.

The subject of this life-sketch is well-known in the political world of India, and Messrs. Ganesh & Co. have been quite up-to-date in bringing out this neat volume. Among other things the book describes Mr. Muhammad Ali as a Pan-Islamist,

as a Speaker, as a Journalist and as a Poet, and adds three of his lectures. A half-tone portrait is also given.

The Master as I Saw Him.—Being pages from the Life of Swami Vivekananda. By his disciple Nivedita, of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Second Edition. Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukerji Lane, Baghbazari, Calcutta. Cloth bound. Pp. 414+xxv. Price Rs. 2/8. Nice get-up.*

The book is not new to the readers of the Prabuddha Bharata, having first appeared serially in its pages. It consists of twenty-seven illuminating sketches from the fascinating pen of the late Sister, with four Appendices. It is not easy to understand such a multi-sided personality as the Swami Vivekananda, and specially for one born outside India. But Sister Nivedita happily adopted the right course in this matter and after a preliminary struggle, which every new-comer has to experience, surrendered herself to the extraordinary genius of the Swami, and the result is the masterpiece of character-study that we have before us. When both the Teacher and the disciple are of exceptional powers, then is the right communion of ideas, and one is struck with admiration as one turns page after page of these reminiscences. There is not one false note and every line breathes sincerity. We heartily welcome this edition of the book, and wish it a wide circulation.

Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita. Edited with translation and elaborate explanations and comments, in Hindi, by R. S. Narayana Swami. To be had of Adhyatma Pustakalaya, 24 Aminuddaula Park, Lucknow, and other places. Part I. Pp. 213+612. Price, Popular Edition Rs. 2, Superior Edition Rs. 3. Cloth-bound.

The Gita is a most wonderful book with the Hindus and a rich mine of spiritual truths. Numerous commentaries, therefore, have been written on it both in the past as well as in the present time. The book under review purports to be an independent commentary which seeks to bring out the real meaning which Bhagavan Sri Krishna intended to convey to Arjuna and through him to the whole world. We do not see how the learned author

can claim this special privilege, as all commentators would be laying a similar claim. It is after all a subjective question. Be that as it may, one thing is plain, that the author has spared no pains to make himself intelligible, and where reputed commentators have explained passages differently, he has mentioned them in footnotes. It is not possible to do full justice to the book within the short space at our disposal, and as we have had time only to look into portions of it, but the paraphrase, context, translation, elaborate explanation, synopsis of chapters and sections, and comments etc., etc., will certainly prove highly useful to those who will patiently go through them. The author is a Sannyasin disciple of the late renowned Swami Ram Tirtha.

NEWS AND NOTES.

SWAMI-Paramananda's visit to Seattle, California, U.S.A., met with overwhelming success. During the few days he spent there he delivered eleven public lectures and held seven private classes. There was an overflowing attendance at all..... All available space was crowded at each meeting and large numbers were turned away..... The Swami was obliged also to devote many hours each day to interviews. Besides these evidences of the interest aroused, many hundreds of books and pamphlets were sold..... There was an insistent demand for a permanent Centre, but the Swami did not feel it possible to consider it for the present. One of the audience writes: "Swami Paramananda left yesterday for Portland. He was in Seattle two short weeks. We all appreciated his visit so much and I trust he will establish a Vedanta Centre here. I am sure, there are a great many people interested. Many evenings we were not able to seat all the people who came to hear him. Words are not adequate to express our delight in having the privilege of attending these lectures and meditation classes. The Swamiji's teachings are so broad, practical and full of uplifting Truth."

It was arranged that the Swami should deliver three lectures in Tacoma—one at the prison—but owing to the pressure of engagements at Seattle he was obliged to cancel two of these. He left Seattle on the 11th of April, delivered three lectures at

*To be had of the Prabuddha Bharata Office, Mayavati.

Portland, and after a brief stop in San Francisco, arrived at Los Angeles on the 18th. On the following day he gave a first lecture at the Vedanta Centre, established there by him two years ago, and on Sunday the 21st began a course of public lectures at Symphony Hall. His work will continue there for the present as in previous years.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston all Services and Classes were held as usual during April, being conducted by Sister Devamata in the Swami's absence. The attendance remained excellent throughout the month.—*Message of the East.*

The following is the report of the Rk. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, for the months of August and September 1918 :—

Indoor patients: There were 13 old cases and 136 newly admitted, of which 133 were discharged cured, 3 died, 5 left treatment and 8 are still in the Sevashrama. Outdoor patients: There were 3059 new cases, and 3721 repetitions of the same.

Last month's balance was Rs. 5031-9-3, and the total receipts Rs. 1713-6-3, of which the sum of Rs 950 was given by Babu Surja Kanta Ray Chowdhury of Taki for a room in the proposed general ward for poor sick people, in memory of his father, to be named "Srikanta Room." The total disbursements amounted to Rs. 282-5-6.

The following gifts were received during the months :—Babu Trailokya Nath Banerjee, Roorki, Two cows; Srijut Nayanathay, Hardwar, One cow; Mahanta Chitghanananda, Kankhal, 1 md. of rice; Mr. S. C. Dass, Calcutta, 1 lb of Quinine.

A correspondent writes :—The presence of Sri-mat Swami Sharvananda in Ceylon greatly awakened the religious spirit among the Hindus of the island. He delivered several lectures on religion and education at Colombo and various parts of Jaffna. At Pettah he delivered two lectures on "The Education that we need" and "Religion as a factor of Civilisation" at the Ridgeway Memorial Hall, on the 27th and 21th September 1918 under the auspices of the Pettah Y. M. H. A. Two other lectures on "The Work before us" and "The Hindu Ideal of life" were delivered at the Nallur Hindu School and Maniepay Hindu College respectively. His presence in Jaffna was the occasion of the opening of many Hindu Vernacular

Schools in the villages. It is the intention of the Swamiji to start an ideal National College at Jaffna to impart higher education to the Hindus. His work is progressing satisfactorily and he is holding a daily class.

THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the following subscriptions and donations to the above fund from Jan.—Sept. 1918 :—

	Rs.	As.
D. K. Natu Esq., Poona ...	18	0
The Hon'ble Justice Sir John Woodroffe	50	0
Mr. C. Raghavaiah & Friends, Kuala Selangor, through K. Bhaskaram Esq.	31	2
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In memory the late Jogeswar Prasad, Monghyr...	2	8
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	266	8
Interest from Savings Bank ...	27	4
Sale proceeds of "Mystery of God and the Universe" ...	1	4
Do. of Boston Pamphlets ...	1	9
Total Rs.	296	9

All contributions will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

Madhavananda.

Secy., M. C. D.

Mayavati, P. O. Lohaghat, Dt. Almora.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN NORTH BENGAL.

Since our last report, after finishing house to house inspection we have opened five centres in Thana Raninagar, five in Noagaon and two in Thana Nandanali—twelve in all. The Calcutta Vivekananda Society is financing the two centres of Nandanali. Though we are managing them, reports of their work will be published by the Society. Nearly ninety-five per cent. of the recipients are Mahomedans and the recipients numbered 3460 in the third week—the figure includes those of the Nandanali Thana also. Besides weekly doles of rice two hundred twenty pairs of new cloths and a good number of old ones were also distributed from all the centres—the need of which is general and acute. In the course of our inspection we came across numbers of naked and semi-naked figures of both the sexes. In the villages round our Dubalhati, Hasaigari and Balihar centres there is an extreme want of fodder for cattle. A good number of them have died for want of it. We have already distributed 4000 'attis' of straw in this area and have decided to continue this for at least a month at a weekly cost of Rs. 250 till the grasses grow. In Hasaigari-centre alone 647 cattle were given fodder. In Raninagar centre, especially in Ratowal, fodder was also distributed with the help of the Noagaon Relief Committee who generously placed in our hands 2000 'attis' of straw.

Below we give the details of weekly distribution of rice from our different centres up to the 5th instant. Dates of first distribution are also given:—

THANA RANINAGAR.

Names of centres.	No. of villages.	No. of recipients.	Quantity of rice. Mds. Srs.
Kashimpur (14-9)	8	90	4 20
Do. (next week)	17	223	11 6
Do.	16	224	11 8
Do.	17	212	10 24
Bill Kishnapur (16-9)	15	55	2 30
Do. (next week)	18	89	4 18
Ratowal (16-9)	30	293	14 26
Do. (next week)	39	822	41 4
Do.	41	637	31 34

Raninagar (18-9)	21	182	9 4
Do. (next week)	25	263	13 6
Do. (2-10-18)	29	262	13 4
Bhandargram (19-9)	22	193	9 32
Do. (next week)	28	275	13 30
Do.	41	406	20 12

THANA NOAGAON

Noagaon (23-9)	26	411	22 22
Do. (next week)	56	542	27 4
Dubalhati (23-9)	23	158	7 36
Do. (next week)	31	229	11 8
Sailgachi (24-9)	22	275	13 30
Do. (next week)	22	311	15 22
Balihar (27-9)	8	48	2 16
Hashaigari (1-10)	6	45	2 10

31 Mds. of rice were given as temporary relief from all the centres.

Since our first appearance on the field the situation has improved. But the flood by destroying nearly 75 p. c. of the paddy crop which is the chief means of sustenance and of income to the poor agriculturists of small holding, and by demolishing houses to the extent of 50 p. c. and above, have reduced the people to a very miserable condition. Because of this, we fear, after a month or two at the utmost from hence, there may be famine in this part if the Government do not come in immediately to help the people with gratuitous relief, agricultural loans, house-building aids, seeds for Rabi crop, of which there is enough time yet, and such other forms of relief.

In conclusion, we beg to offer our heartiest thanks on behalf of the distressed people to the generous individuals, organisations and Committees who have so far helped us in this work of service with their contributions. We hope and expect their sympathies will continue till the end of our work. As the people are still in need of relief so we appeal to all to help us in offering the same and request them to send their mites, whether it be money or cloth, to one of the following addresses where they will be received with thanks and acknowledged:—(1) Secretary, R. K. Mission, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. (2) President, R. K. Mission, Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah.

Saradananda.

10-10-18.

Secy., R. K. Mission.